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REMARKS ON A PAMPHLET, CALL'D A CONFERENCE ABOUT INFANT-BAPTISM.

The MISTAKES of the AUTHOR
are set in a clear Light,

BELIEVERS proved to be the only
proper Subjects of *BAPTISM*,

A N D

IMMERSION or PLUNGING Essential to it.

In a LETTER to a Pædobaptist Friend.

1 Cor. xi. 2.—*And keep the Ordinances as I have
delivered them unto you.*

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A

LETTER TO A *Pædobaptist FRIEND.*



IR, as you are pleased to desire my Sentiments of a Pamphlet lately publish'd, call'd *A Conference about Infant-Baptism, &c.* I cannot easily deny you. And as it concerns a sacred Ordinance of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, I must beg Leave to speak my Mind freely; I am not certain who was the Author of the CONFERENCE, but knowing you to be a Member of a *Pædobaptist* Society, I take the Liberty, for Distinction Sake, to call the Speakers therein your Pastor and your Member.

I begin with your Pastor's Observations, on the Account your Member gives him of his Christian Experience. Page the 4th.

" You mention the Care of your pious Parents, to impress you with a Sense of your Baptismal-Vow, as the Beginning of an early Piety; and likewise the Advantage you have found in the Renewal of your Covenant at the Lord's Table; by which it appears, God has owned your Infant Baptism, and made it very useful to you; and as you have found it to be so, I hope you will not think of giving it up as a Nullity: It is very probable, that Attempts may have been made to persuade you to do so, by some officious Zealots, who are for bringing over as many as they can influence to their Party; but as I have always thought you to be a Man of a tender Conscience, so I believe you will not suffer your self to be hurried in such an Affair, as that which is before you, especially considering all Circumstances. Precipitancy you must allow to be a Fault, and it carries too great an Imputation of Ignorance, Lightness or Folly, for Men to quit or renounce their former

" mer Tenets presently upon the offer of an Argument,
 " which they cannot immediately answer, and shew the In-
 " sufficiency of. People of weak Minds very often do so ;
 " but I cannot have so mean an Opinion of your Understand-
 " ing, as to think that you will yield your Judgment to
 " plausible Appearances, or to the positive and solemn Air,
 " which some affect, and with which they deliver their
 " favourite Notions."

For my part I could never yet understand what Vows Infants can be supposed to make at their Baptism ; and when they grow up, to tell them that they are under Obligations to fulfil their Vows which they (the Infants) made at their Baptism, is not a little strange, when even a dawning Reason will be ready to reply, that they know not of any they made ? tho' perhaps the Reverence they pay to a Parent or Elder, will not suffer them to say so. To tell them indeed of the Obligations they are under to God for their Being, Sustenance, Revelation of his Word, and the glorious Doctrines contained therein ; and that they are to believe the Gospel and be Baptized ; and that God has annexed Rewards and Punishments in an eternal World, to their Obedience or Disobedience here : this is both reasonable and scriptural ; and most likely to be blessed of God, to the making Impressions on tender Minds.

That godly Parents among the *Pædobaptists* as well as others, instruct their Children and endeavour to set before them Examples of Piety, and that those Instructions and Examples, are often blessed of God, to their spiritual Advantage, is not deny'd, but that the Child's Serious Concern about Vows he never made, is an Evidence of God's owning Infant-Baptism, doth not appear ; because there are many Instances of the Children of Baptist's, on whom Instructions and Examples have been equally succesful, who have no Concern on this Head.

In Page the 4th your Member complains, " He is shaken in his Opinion of *Pædobaptism*, to that Degree, by the Arguments of (a *Baptist*, or as your Pastor would call him, an *Anabaptist Preacher*) that he is strongly inclin'd to believe, that no other Baptism has a Foundation in the Word of God, but that of adult Believers" ; and your Pastor presently afterwards represents him as a Man of a tender Conscience, a good Understanding and a steady Judgment" ; and in Page the 6th, the *Anabaptist*

baptist Preacher is supposed to be “ Destitute of the Advantage of a liberal Education ; and gaining his Point, not so much by strength of Arguments, or any Address in the Management of them, as by the Assurance with which he pronounces them unanswerable”.

But how such a *Conscience, Understanding and Judgment*, found with his Member, could be made to stagger by such a Preacher, making Use of such a Manner of Address, seems somewhat unaccountable.

In Page the 5th, your Pastor supposes his Member’s Dissatisfaction to be occasioned by an unwarrantable Curiosity, and says, “ How far that (*Curiosity*) should be gratified in Matters of Religion, and particularly in running (as the Manner of some is) from one Place of Worship to another, upon all Occasions, is a Point, which he shall not enter into, though it may deserve Consideration”.

I think with him it deserves Consideration, so as to call for our Imitation, when under the Direction of Christian Prudence, for as the Apostle says, *I Thes. v. 21.* We are to prove all Things, hold fast that which is good. And with me it is a shrewd’ Sign of a bad Cause, when Ministers endeavour to persuade People to hear none but themselves.

“ But such, he says, are in Danger of designing Men, who are bent upon making Proselytes ; and they heap to themselves Teachers, having itching Ears, turning away their Ears from the Truth, and are turned unto Fables ; and so like Children are tossed too and fro, and carried about with every Wind of Doctrine”.

I cannot see how this can affect either his dissatisfied Member, or the *Anabaptists* ; for the first is allowed to be a Man of such Understanding and Judgment, as bespeaks him not a Child, and therefore in no Danger of being tossed too and fro with every Wind ; and the latter having no Accomplishments but Assurance, positive and solemn Airs, are in no Condition to dress up Fables, to please itching Ears ; who are generally speaking, more apt to follow the *Polite* than the Plain Preachers of the Gospel. The Reflection on *Subscriptions* and *Church-Covenants* is quite beside the Argument ; but,

The next Observation deserves our Notice. “ No one says he, should be tenacious of Notions, or Customs in Religion ; because they prevail in the Country where he lives, and he was trained up in them from his Infancy ;

“ for

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" for if upon an impartial Examination he sees Reason to
" depart from them it is his Duty to do so".

This is certainly true ; but how it is reconcilable to what is said above, I cannot conceive ; for how can Persons examine unless they hear ? and how can they hear except they converse with, or attend on others (at least occasionally) besides those they were trained up with from their Infancy ?

Page the 6th, Your Pastor addresses his Member in this remarkable Manner,

" You have told me, that the *Anabaptist* Preacher, when
" you heard him first, was upon the Distinguishing Opinion
" of that Denomination ; and so I apprehend he has been
" several times since, when you were present. This gives
" me an Occasion to observe, what Pains some take to
" bring People over to their Interest. *Party-Men* of all
" Persuasions make this too much their Aim. The Low
" Game (if I may so express it) is play'd by too many, especi-
ally by the Leaders of every Sect, and this has been taken
" Notice of among the *Anabaptists* in particular. Far be it
" from me, to intend this as a Reflection upon their Body.
" Many of their Ministers I am perswaded, look upon their
" discriminating Notion of little or no Moment, when
" compar'd with the great End which ought to be pro-
" cuted, and employ their valuable Abilities chiefly with a
" View to that End. But such as never had the Advantage
" of a liberal Education are, generally speaking, exceeding
" fond of having many Followers, and so Believers *Baptism*
" is the Subject presently insisted upon".

By this I perceive your Pastor's Aim is not so much against the *Anabaptist* Ministers of *valuable Abilities*, as he calls them, whom he seems to compliment, as against those Preachers who never had the Advantage of a liberal Education. But I think he has inadvertently spoiled his own Design ; for if it is as he says, what greater Charge of Hypocrisy can he bring against the former, than to discriminate themselves from the rest of Mankind, by professing Believers Baptism, and yet look upon it as a Matter of little or no Moment ? And what can be more honest and consequently Praise-worthy in the latter than frequently to let the World know the Reasons of their Practice ? But he says, " they (the illiterate) are exceeding fond of having many Followers". I suppose he designs this as a Complaint ; but where is the Minister who does not desire Numbers.

And

And whereas he seems to commend the learned Anabaptist Ministers, for looking upon their discriminating Notion of Believers Baptism, as a Matter of little or no Moment, when compar'd with the great *End*; so, by a parity of Reasoning, I must take it for granted, that he looks upon his discriminating Notion of *Infant-Baptism*, in the same Light; and therefore I wonder he should employ his valuable Abilities, and take so much Pains, to write about a Matter of little or no Moment, when the great End wants so much prosecuting. But by these Instances we may discover the shortness of human Wisdom, and that sometimes even the Learned are inconsistent with themselves.

Before I proceed more immediately to the argumentative Part of the *Conference*, I cannot help observing, that there is the Appearance at least, of a more dangerous Error, than that of *Infant-Baptism*; and this with Respect to the Covenant of Grace, which your Pastor and his Authors, have transformed into a Covenant of Works, at least to my Understanding; for the Foundation of Persons Security, he seems to lay first in their Parents, and then in themselves.

For Believers may, and ought, he says, to enter their Children into the Covenant of Grace, Page the 37th; and in the same Page says expressly, "That when they come to Maturity, by being wicked and irreligious, they cut themselves off from the Blessings of it", that is from all needful Supplies of Grace here and Glory hereafter, as he explains it in Page 8. But if he will call this the Tenor of the Covenant of Grace, I am perswaded great Numbers of his *Pædobaptist* Brethren will own the Scripture to be against him, and with good Reason; for if Children have "all needful Supplies of Grace here and Glory hereafter", by being in this Covenant, how can they cut themselves off from the Blessings of it? for all needful *Supplies of Grace*, must needs secure the Soul to Glory, as we are expressly assured, he who gives Grace will also give Glory—. But to attend to his Reasoning, he begins with the *Abrahamic Covenant*, Page 7, 8.

And here I cannot but observe, that as the *Pædobaptists* have long since been driven out of the New Testament, as to a Warrant for their Practice, they are obliged to fly to the Old, and your Pastor has followed them herein; but it is strange, very strange, that the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesu Christ should not be full enough, on the Head of Gospel Worship, without having Recourse to the Old.

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Old. However, let us first consider the real Covenant of Grace, and see how far it will make for your Pastor's Purpose. And as far as I am a Judge of it,

It is a solemn Engagement, wherein the Almighty has made over all Spiritual Blessings, both of Grace and Glory to his own peculiar People, and has peremptorily determined that they shall be eventually and eternally saved, thro' Jesus Christ the Mediator.

This was the Doctrine upon which the glorious Reformation was built, as may be evidently seen by the Articles of the Church of *England*, particularly the seventeenth, which runs thus :

“ Predestination to Life is the eternal Purpose of God,
“ whereby (before the Foundation of the World was laid)
“ he hath constantly decreed by his Counsel, secret to us, to
“ deliver from Curse and Damnation, those whom he hath
“ chosen in Christ out of Mankind ; and to bring them by
“ Christ to everlasting Salvation, as Vessels made to Honour.
“ Wherefore they which be endued with so excellent a Bene-
“ fit of God, be called according to God’s Purpose, by his
“ Spirit working in due Season. They through Grace obey
“ the Calling, they be justified freely ; they be made the
“ Sons of God by Adoption ; they be made like the Image
“ of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ ; they walk religi-
“ oufly in good Works, and at length, by God’s Mercy,
“ they attain to everlasting Felicity”.

The same Doctrine of the Covenant of Grace, is clearly maintain’d by the Assembly of Divines, thus in their Catechism.

‘Tis ask’d, Quest. 20. “ Did God leave all Mankind to perish in the State of Sin and Misery” ? the Answer is, “ God having out of his mere good Pleasure, from all Eternity, elected some to everlasting Life, did enter into a Covenant of Grace, to deliver them out of the State of Sin and Misery, and to bring them into a State of Salvation, by a Redeemer”.

But to produce the highest Authority ; One of the most clear and inexceptionable Passages of Scripture as to this Covenant, is Heb. viii. 10. *For this is the Covenant that I will make with the House of Israel, after those Days saith the Lord, I will put my Laws into their Mind, and write them in their Hearts, and I WILL be to them a God, and THEY SHALL be to me a People.* Which is very

agreeable to that of the Apostle, *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the Image of his Son, that he might be the First-born amongst many Brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called, and whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified,* Rom. viii. 29, 30. And again, *According as he hath chosen us in him, before the Foundation of the World, that we should be holy and without Blame, before him in Love. Having predestinated us unto the Adoption of Children, by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good Pleasure of his Will,* Ephes. i. 4, 5.

Here you see is an Order of Causes in this Covenant, from before the Foundation of the World, with the Effects produced in time, to their Consummation in Glory; therefore it is called an everlasting Covenant, order'd in all things and sure, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

Now I would ask, is this the Covenant God made with all Abraham's fleshly Seed? Did God elect or predestinate all of them to eternal Life? Did he put his Law into all their Minds, and write it in all their Hearts? Did not many of them die in their Sins? Again, did Circumcision enter them into this Covenant? Or,

Are all the Children of Believers now in this Covenant of Grace? are they all elected or predestinated to eternal Life? Does the Almighty put his Law into all their Minds? and write it in all their Hearts?

Don't we see great Numbers of them running the broad Way to Destruction, and daily cut off in the midst of their Sins? Or does Baptism in any shape enter any Person into this Covenant of Grace? To me it is most evident, that whosoever is not in this Covenant (by Vertue of the previous Counsel of God in his Infancy, will never be found in it in his Years of Maturity: And on the other Hand, whosoever is in it in his Infancy, shall never be permitted to throw himself finally out of it; for the Party shall be assuredly called in the Series of Time, by the Efficacy of divine Grace, and when called, shall be kept by the mighty Power of God, thro' Faith unto Salvation. Hence it is plain, that no Man can put his Child, or the nearest Relative that he has, into this Covenant. For Parents therefore to pretend to entail upon their Children, an hereditary Right to the Covenant of Grace; is to invade God's Sovereignty, and to take his proper Work out of his Hands. And from hence we may fur-

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ther see, how weak and groundless your Pastor's Doctrine is, when he talks of entring Children into this Covenant of Grace. Moreover,

If your Pastor means an outward Covenant of Grace, the Baptists know of no such under the New Testament.

As to your Pastor's ten Arguments, to prove that the Covenant made with *Abraham*, was, as to the vital and spiritual Part of it, the Covenant of Grace, " the same Covenant " which was made betwixt God and us through Christ". When he makes a Distinction of Parts, the Baptists will allow him all he can fairly desire, at the same Time observing, that Circumcision did not enter Persons into the vital and spiritual Part of this Covenant. But let us hear his own Reasoning upon it.

Page the 12th, " Allowing that Covenant to have been, as " to the vital and spiritual Part of it, the proper and eternal " Covenant of Grace, it is undeniable, that it was the same " that was made with our first Parents immediately after the " Fall, and the same by which all the Faithful from *Adam* to " *Abraham* (to whom the Promise was more explicit) were " saved, and by which all God's People have been saved " since, and will be to the End of Time. So that as to the " vital Part of it, it can never be maintained, that it was " a Covenant made peculiarly with *Abraham*; and as to " the Circumstances, these I dismiss as having no Place in " the Argument".

Here is a vital and a spiritual Part owned, and a plain Intimation of a temporal, and dying, or vanishing Part; at the same time he warily dismisses the *Circumstances*, as having no Place in the Argument; but I apprehend these Things which he calls *Circumstances*, have a considerable Place in it, they being the other Part, viz. the temporal, domestic, visible and vanishing Part, and which Circumcision had a Regard chiefly, if not only. You see then, here are two Parts of this Covenant (an Essential and Circumstantial one) own'd by your Pastor, we have already had a Description of the vital one even the invisible and spiritual Part from Scripture; and which our Reformers agree, that the Persons interested in it were " predestinated (according to the Church of England " Article) before the Foundations of the World were laid", according to the dissenting *Pædobaptist* Churches) " elected " from all Eternity", to Grace and Glory, that they might as your Pastor words it, have " God to be their Preserver " Shield

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"Shield, Portion and Reward", and thus certainly attain to everlasting Felicity.

As to the other Part of this *Abrahamic Covenant*, if we consult the Scriptures, your Pastor refers to, we shall find, Gen. xvii. ver. 2.—14. God promises, *I will make my Covenant between me and thee, and I will multiply thee exceedingly; and Abram fell on his Face, and God talked with him, saying, as for me, behold my Covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a Father of many Nations, neither shall thy Name be any more called Abram, but thy Name shall be called Abraham; for a Father of many Nations have I made thee, and I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make Nations of thee, and Kings shall come out of thee, and I will establish my Covenant between me and thee, and thy Seed after thee, in their Generations, for an everlasting Covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy Seed after thee, the Land wherein thou art a stranger, all the Land of Canaan for an everlasting Possession, and I will be their God. And God said unto Abraham, thou shalt keep my Covenant; therefore thou, and thy Seed after thee, in their Generations; this is my Covenant which ye shall keep between me and you and thy Seed after thee. Every Man Child among you shall be circumcised: And ye shall circumcise the Flesh of your Foreskin, and it shall be a Token of the Covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight Days old shall be circumcised, among you, every Man Child in your Generation, he that is born in the House, or bought with Money, or any Stranger which is not of thy Seed. He that is born in thine House, and he that is bought with thy Money, must needs be circumcised, and my Covenant shall be in your Flesh, for an everlasting Covenant. And the uncircumcised Man Child whose Flesh of his Foreskin is not circumcised, that Soul shall be cut off from his People: he hath broken my Covenant.*

According to this, one Part of Abraham's Covenant was, that he should be the Father of many Nations, have a multitude of Children, which should possess the Land of Canaan for a long time, and have God's Protection over them to that End: and take Notice, this is extended to all his natural Children, as his Children according to the Flesh, not so the other Part. Moreover, that these outward, visible, domestic and vanishing Promises, did typify, set forth, and secretly mean the other Part of this Covenant; that is, the vital, spiritual, invisible, and eternal Part, as the Apostle abundantly

explains, *Gal.* iii. the Baptists will readily own. But the Question is, to whom do these two Parts belong? Your Pastor observes in his 6th Argument, Page the 9th, "the Covenant was made with *Abraham* as the Father of Believers, and with his Posterity, not merely as proceeding from him by natural Generation, but as Heirs of his Faith": This directly answers our Purpose; for here you see he makes a Difference between the Heirs of his Faith, and the Heirs of his Flesh; (a Distinction which at once overturns his whole Scheme) for then the spiritual Part of *Abraham's* Covenant belongs to the Heirs of his Faith, and the temporal Part to the Heirs of his Flesh. No one will, I believe, say all *Abraham's* Children were saved; such as *Ishmael*, *Esau*, *Nadab* and *Abihu*, *Hophni* and *Phineas*, *Amon* and *Abfolom*, and *Judas Iscariot*; most of these were cut off in the midst of their Sins, and yet *Abraham's* Children. And others who were not his Offspring according to the Flesh, obtain'd Mercy at the Hand of the Lord, as *Job* and his Friends, *Rahab* the Harlot, and others.

And if, as your Pastor observes, "it is not merely as proceeding from him by natural Generation, but as Heirs of his Faith", &c. we may safely conclude, that as here are two Parts owned in this *Abrahamic* Covenant, it was a mix'd or composite Covenant, made up partly of temporal, and partly of spiritual Blessings; and these different Parts belonging to two sorts of Persons, the temporal and vanishing to *Abraham's* fleshly Seed, and the spiritual and vital to his faithful Seed abstractedly considered. And whoever confounds the one with the other, must either weakly or wilfully, abuse the Scripture. If the Question remains, who are *Abraham's* faithful Seed? We answer, none but those who are chosen of God, and which are born, not of Blood, nor of the Will of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God; with a View that they might be holy, and without Blame before him in Love. If your Pastor pleads for Believer's Children, that they are Heirs of their Parents Faith; as he says, *Abraham's* were circumcised because they were Heirs of his Faith, the Baptist's will readily agree with him, that provided they can prove such an Heirship by their good Works; which is the scriptural Test of true Faith, (Shew me thy Faith without thy Works, and I will shew thee my Faith by my Works. *Jam.* ii. 18.) they may lay Claim to all Gospel Privileges, and till such Fruits appear, they cannot be denominated

nominated Heirs of their Parents Faith; and therefore, according to his own Doctrine, have no Right to such Privileges as are peculiar to Believers.

Page the 11th, he says, "That temporal Blessings were promised in the Covenant made with *Abraham* is granted, and so they are in the Gospel. Seek ye the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you, *Mat. vi. 33*. And the Apostle tells us, "Godliness hath the Promise of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come, *1 Tim. vi. 8*. But the *Anabaptists* will not pretend to call the Gospel Covenant a mix'd Covenant upon that Account, and why should that made with *Abraham*, because of the temporal Blessings contained in, it be denominated so, and by way of Objection to its being a Covenant of Grace".

But I apprehend there is a wide Difference, between earthly Inheritances, Empire, Riches, and a multitude of Children, which were the peculiar Blessings of the *Abrahamic* Covenant, and Food and Rayment, which are absolutely necessary to continue Life, in order to bring about the Designs of God in the Covenant of Grace, *viz.* "That they may be made like the Image of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ, that they may walk religiously in good Works, and at length, by God's Mercy, attain to everlasting Felicity".*

And we know the temporal Promises of the *Abrahamic* Covenant were founded upon conditional Obedience, as the Event abundantly verified; whereas the other, or spiritual Promises had Obedience given in them. But had your Pastor examined the Circumstances (as he calls them) instead of dismissing them from the Argument, I am persuaded he would have found Reasons not to confound the total of the *Abrahamic* Covenant, with the Covenant of Grace.

Page the 14th, your Member says, "How can it be accounted for, that there should be a Distinction made between the Old Covenant and the New, if as you say, they are the same? and why should the New be represented as a better Covenant, and established upon better Promises? To which your Pastor answers;

"The Covenant, as we have it set forth in the Gospel, is called New, not in Regard of the Substance, but Manner of Dispensation; it being ratified afresh by the Blood

" and

" and actual Sufferings of Christ ; being freed from those Rites
 " and Ceremonies wherewith it was formerly administred ;
 " containing a more full and clear Revelation of the My-
 " steries of Religion ; attended with a larger Measure of the
 " Gifts and Graces of the Spirit ; propounded and extended
 " to all, and never to wax old or be abolished, as to this
 " new Edition of it : and for the same Reasons it is said to
 " be a better Covenant".

This is putting the Old and New on the same Footing ; but with Submission to this learned Gentleman, I apprehend the Apostle gives us better Reasons for those different Denominations of *Old* and *New* Covenants : See Heb. viii. 6.—13. *But now hath he* (speaking of Christ) *obtained a more excellent Ministry, by how much also he is the Mediator of a better Covenant, which was established upon better Promises.* *For if that first Covenant had been Faultless, then should no Place have been sought for the second.* *For finding Fault with them, he saith, Behold the Days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new Covenant with the House of Israel, and the House of Judah.* *Not according to the Covenant that I made with their Fathers, in the Day when I took them by the Hand, to lead them out of the Land of Egypt, because they continued not in my Covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.* *For this is the Covenant that I will make with the House of Israel, after those Days, saith the Lord, I will put my Laws into their Mind, and write them in their Hearts : And I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a People.* *And they shall not teach every Man his Neighbour, and every Man his Brother, saying, know the Lord : For all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.* *For I will be merciful to their Unrighteousness, and their Sins and Iniquities will I remember no more.*

In that he saith, A new Covenant, he hath made the first Old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth Old, is ready to vanish away.

Thus we see, the Old Covenant in one Part of it was founded upon conditional Promises, and supported only by the wretched Resolutions, and backsliding Will of Fallen Man. Whereas the Promises of the New, were founded upon the Sovereign Will, and supported by the absolute and uncontrollable Resolution of the Almighty ; which shew's an infinite Difference between the Old Mosaic and the New, or Gospel Covenant. And therefore your Pastor had forgot the best

Reasons

Reasons, why they are called *Old* and *New*, with Regard to the Nature and Manner of the Promises.

But before I proceed, I cannot but take Notice of a Citation from *Clark's Annot.* in Page the 11th, “ The moral Law by “ discovering Sin and the Curse, did drive to Christ for Par-“ don”; this, as I take it, is brought to prove that it was the same with that Covenant which is made betwixt God and us through Christ.

But as the moral Law by its Precepts and Penalties, fills the Soul with the Horrors of God’s Wrath, and Justice, I cannot see how it can be the same with the Covenant of Grace, any more than a human Law, which hath condemned a Malefactor to Death, can be denominated an Act of Grace, only because it stimulates the Party to apply to the Prince for Pardon.

But your Pastor says, “ They under the Law obtained “ Salvation, by the Righteousness of Christ”. Then the Jewish Covenant, could have no hand in their Salvation; therefore not the same which is made betwixt God and us through Christ, the moral Part being too severe to justify, and the ceremonial too weak to obtain Pardon.

I have been the more particular here, because the Argument is not only inconsistent with it self, but more dangerous in its Consequence, than *Infant-Baptism*: for when Persons shall see it asserted, by Masters in *Israel*, that the Covenant made with the Jews, (of which all know the Ten Commandments to be the only Part remaining) is the same which was made betwixt God and us through Christ; they will be tempted to rest in it for Justification: And in so doing, lose their Souls, for as many as are of the Works of the Law, are under the Curse, *Gal. iii. 10.*

Page the 14th, your Pastor says, “ that which I have next “ to advance is, that Infants were included in the Covenant “ of Old, and in Consequence of that admitted Members of “ the Church; for the Proof of this I refer you to *Gen. xvii. 9—14.* Where we read, that every Man-child was “ to be circumcised at eight Days: and it is expressly said of “ the uncircumcised Man-child, that Soul shall be cut off from “ his People, he hath broken my Covenant. Accordingly “ we find that Infants were circumcised at the Time appoint-“ ed; and this was done as long as the Jewish Oeconomy “ continued, and till the Gospel Dispensation superseded it. “ By this Sign or Token the Circumcised became engaged to “ be

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" be God's People : (and from Dr. Patrick) For it was not
" a mere Mark whereby they should be known to be *Abra-*
" *ham's Seed*, and distinguished from other Nations : but
" they were made by this the Children of the Covenant, and
" entitled to the Blessings of it".

I suppose your Pastor believes Dr. Patrick, because he cites him, and if so, his Doctrine is self-contradictory ; for if Circumcision makes them Children of the Covenant, it supposes they were not in it if they were not circumcised, then how could they be cut off as Covenant-Breakers, who were never in it by Circumcision ? And if they were in this Covenant, by virtue of being *Abraham's Seed*, or his Purchase, how could Circumcision make them Children of it ? unless they had two Titles to it ; as to which your Pastor is silent, but his Citation says, " Circumcision makes them Children of the Covenant, and entitles them to the Blessings of it" ; if so, it could not arise from their being *Abraham's Children*.

But see the next Answer of your Pastor to the Member, wherein he denies that circumcising a Person was a Token of one Part of the Covenant, and not of the other, and compare the Text above, which he brings to prove that Infants were included in the Covenant of Old, *viz.* *That Soul shall be cut off from his People, he hath broken my Covenant* ; And the Citation here to prove that Circumcision entitled Infants to the spiritual and eternal Blessings included therein, as well as to the Inheritance of *Canaan* ; then, the Scripture must be made to run thus : If a male Infant, or adult Person, by his Parent's Neglect or Ignorance, or his own Ignorance or Neglect, or any other Means, is not circumcised, he shall be put to Death (or excommunicated) and be deprived of eternal Blessings in another World.

If it should be objected, that this is meant of the Adult only ; take Notice there is no Age set for Execution (or Excommunication) but the Infant, as well as the Adult, must suffer for Breach of Covenant ; for it is said, the uncircumcised Man-child, that is an Infant after eight Days old.

It is true, that under that severe Dispensation, Infants often suffered for the Sins of their Parents, both by the Hand and Command of God ; but that they perished eternally on that Account, which must be the Case if your Pastor's Doctrine is true, is not to be believed.

Therefore that Scripture must run better, according to the Baptist's Explanation, thus :

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If a male Infant, or adult Person, by the neglect of his Parents, his own Ignorance, or any other Means, is not circumcised, he shall be put to Death, and be deprived of all the temporal Blessings of my Covenant, made with *Abraham*, which he hath broken ; but if he belongs to that Part which is spiritual or the Covenant of Grace, his Soul shall be saved eternally. Now which Explanation is best, is submitted to all candid Judgments, and from this it appears, that Circumcision was a Token of the ~~spiritual~~^{*temporal} Part chiefly, if not only, of the Covenant of Old. And to confirm it, see *Rom.* ix. 6. for they are not all of (spiritual) *Israel*, which are of (literal) *Israel*; and ver. 8. They which are the Children of the Flesh, these are not the Children of God : but the Children of the Promise, are counted for the Seed. Whence we may safely conclude, that there were two Parts in, and two sorts of Persons under that Covenant.

Page the 15th, your Pastor says, “ The next Step which I take in the Argument is this, as Infants stood in Covenant Relation to God, and were accounted Members of the Church formerly, so they have the same Privileges under the Gospel”.

This Argument looks plausible at first Sight, but let us state it fairly. “ Infants were Members of the *Jewish* Church, therefore they ought to be Members of the Christian Church”. As I hinted before, it is wonderful, that People will plead for a *Jewish* Model, when the New Testament is so explicit.

But let us remember, that our Lord Jesus Christ has by his Death, taken away all the temporal Promises of his *Abrahamic*, and *Mosaic* Covenants, (except necessary Food and Rayment) nailing them to his Cross, and left none remaining, but the spiritual and eternal Part, contained in the Covenant of Grace ; which hath brought Life and Immortality to Light through the Gofpel, for all *Abraham's* spiritual Children, or Believers ; and none ought to be admitted to the sacred Ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, but they who (in the Judgment of Charity) can give Evidence, that they have a saving Faith in the Redeemer, and a Conversation agreeable thereto; and thereby appear to have an Interest in the Covenant of Grace ; and they who thus voluntarily offer themselves, as Subjects of those divine Institutions, best answer the Design of the Legislator, by making it appear to Angels and Men, that Jesus Christ the Son of God, has a

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willing People in the Day of his Power: All which Infants cannot do.

But to return to the Argument above mentioned, that “Infants were Members of the *Jewish Church*, therefore “they ought to be Members of Christian Churches”. And Your Pastor affirms three Reasons to support his Assertion, *viz.*

1. “That our kind and merciful Redeemer, did not deprive “little Children of any of the Privileges which had been “before granted them.”
2. “That as the Gospel Church was to be larger than the “*Jewish Church*, therefore Infants were not excluded, be-“cause that would deprive them of their Privileges”.
3. “It is no where said in Scripture that Infants were ex-“cluded from the Church and Covenant, therefore their “Privileges are still continued”.

These Reasons seem calculated only to work upon the Affections of tender Parents, by insinuating that Baptism intitles their Infants to wonderful things; which however, he has not thought fit to particularize; but after five Pages spent in asserting the Point, it is but mere begging the Question: For the Baptists never in Word or Deed, denied their Children any Privileges which could be of Use to their Souls, as will easily appear, by comparing their Privileges with the Privileges of their Opponent’s Children; and which, if I mistake not, will sufficiently invalidate his three Reasons with all thinking People. As,

1. The *Pædobaptist*’s Infants have the Privileges of the Prayers of their Parents, and the Churches, as soon as they are in being, and before they are baptized, so have the *Baptist*’s Infants; therefore they are equal under this Consideration.

2. The *Pædobaptist*’s Children, when they come to Reason, are instructed in the Principles of Christianity, taught and exhorted to read and hear the Scripture, to obey the Ordinances of Christ, to do unto all Men as they would all Men should do unto them: all these Privileges the *Baptist*’s Children enjoy too, therefore equal likewise here.

3. The *Pædobaptist*’s Children have Examples of Virtue and Piety set them, by their godly Parents: the *Baptist*’s Children have the same, where their Parents are religious.

4. The Great God often blesses the Prayers, Instructions, and Examples, of the *Pædobaptists* to the Conversion of their Children: and the Case is the same, when he pleases, with Respect

Respect to the Children of *Baptists*. So that these being the real apparent Privileges of both Parties ; I cannot see but all their Advantages are upon an equal Footing.

If it should be objected, that the *Pædobaptist's* Children have the Advantage of being put in Mind of Obligations which they laid themselves under, by Vows made by them in Infancy ; I take this to be only an imaginary Privilege ; because it will be a Difficulty to make the Children believe that they made any such Vows. But the Advantages which the *Baptist's* Children have are real, because now they have an Opportunity of making Vows by Baptism with their Understanding and Judgment, and by knowing what they do, must think themselves obliged to perform them.

From what has been said in answer to these Reasons, we may see the Weakness of your Pastor's Insinuation here, and throughout his whole Piece, that the Baptists are guilty of robbing Infants of their Privileges ; whereas the contrary manifestly appears, for their Children have rather the Advantage.

In the next Place, he proceeds to shew that the Privileges of Infants are continued under the Gospel, and argues from four Texts of Scripture to prove it.

We might here satisfy ourselves with what has been said above, concerning the Privileges of baptiz'd, and unbaptiz'd Infants, as a sufficient Answer to this ; but that nothing material may be overlook'd, they shall be consider'd distinctly.

The first is *Matt. xix. 14.* Suffer Little Children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Your Pastor, to do him Justice, does not bring this Text to prove Infant Baptism directly, (as some weak People have done) but to prove, that Christ acknowledged them Members of his Gospel Church, or of his Kingdom ; and therefore says, " That Christ did not baptize these Infants is granted, but he put his Hands upon them and blessed them ; and we think plainly intimated their Fitness to be admitted into his Church, and so to receive Christian Baptism, the only Means of entring Persons into his Kingdom".

I think what is mentioned here in favour of *Infant-Baptism*, is a strong Proof against it, for if *Baptism* is the only Means of entring Persons into Christ's Kingdom, and those Infants were fit Subjects for that Kingdom, why did not our Lord enter them by *Baptism*? I suppose none will presume to

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say he had forgot it, or that he neglected to order his Disciples to do it, or that the Parents would not suffer it ; when they were so desirous to bring them to him ? But it is said, “ He put his Hands upon them, and blessed them, “ or prayed, and therefore they ought to be baptized”.

But is not this concluding too fast, and calling in Question the Wisdom of our Lord, who it is granted did not baptize them ? and therefore I conceive it would become us, as good Servants, not to go beyond his Line. That Ministers, or private Christians, ought to bless or dedicate Infants to God by Prayer, the Baptists did never deny ; but as to the Point in dispute, they think it best to follow that which is granted to be their Lord’s Example, that is, not to baptize them. And if there was nothing else to be advanced against *Infant-Baptism*, besides this Instance of our Lord’s Conduct, it ought to have great Weight with tender Consciences ; for if closely considered, it visibly makes against that Practice.

But the second Text advanced is, *1 Cor. vii. 14*. For the unbelieving Husband is sanctified by the Wife, and the unbelieving Wife is sanctified by the Husband, else were your Children unclean ; but now are they holy. As to which he says, “ This is not to be understood of a real Holiness, or internal Purity, but the Meaning must be, that such Children were not upon the same Foot with those of the Heathens, styled the Unclean, in Opposition to the *Jews*, God’s Covenant People ; but federally holy, and so to be entred into the Christian Church, and admitted into the Messiah’s Kingdom, as was said before”.

Your Pastor has been hitherto pleading for Infants being admitted to Church Membership, in Right of their Descent from ~~lawless~~ Parents, and yet owns here, that they receive no real Holiness, or internal Purity, therefore herein he declares, That a Gospel Church may consist of many Members, who cannot be esteemed really holy, or internally purified. But the Apostle could esteem every Member of the ancient Churches really holy, and internally purified. By one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body, — and have been all made to drink into one Spirit, *1 Cor. xii. 13*. In whom you also are builded together, for a Habitation of God, through the Spirit, *Ephes. ii. 22*. These Instances plainly demonstrate, that all Persons ought to give Indications of their real Holiness, or internal Purity, before they are admitted to Church Membership.

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But in Answer to your Pastor's federal Holiness, which he says Infants receive from their Parents, I perceive he means a *Jewish* Holiness, in Opposition to the Heathen; but this cannot be the Meaning of the Text, for the *Jewish* Man taking a heathenish Woman corrupted their Children, and they were obliged to put away both Wife and Children: as may be seen, *Ezra*, chap. x, and *Nehemiah*, chap. xiii. whereas the Apostle allows, if one of the married Couple is a Believer, the Child is holy, therefore he could not mean a *Jewish* Holiness; but to come at the Apostle's true Meaning, we may observe from the first Verse, and the two succeeding Chapters, that the *Corinthians* had wrote to him, to know how to behave with regard to Matrimony, Slavery, Celibacy, &c. and particularly about cohabiting with their unbelieving Husbands and Wives; to which he answers, that they were not to be put away, nor depart from the Unbeliever; for in so doing, they would loudly declare to their own Consciences and others, that their former State of Matrimony was unlawful, and consequently unholy, and their Children, which they had in that State unclean or unholy, that is, illegitimate; Not that the Apostle esteemed the Matrimony of any of the Heathen unlawful, but the Consciences of these new Christians being tender, were ready to doubt that it might be so; therefore he lets them know, that a true Believer, sanctifies every Station and Relation of Life, with the Word of God and Prayer, and for that Reason their living with, and esteeming their Wives lawful, and their Children legitimate, was acceptable in the Sight of God; not that the unbelieving Husband, Wife, or Child, were more holy in the Sight of God than they were before; but now they are sanctified or made holy by the Believer's own Conscience by Virtue of Faith, which they were not before, as it is said, *Tit. i. 15.* Unto the Pure all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their Mind and Conscience is defiled. Besides, the Holiness in Dispute cannot give the Child a Title to Baptism; for if it does, it must give the same Title to the unbelieving Husband or Wife; and I think all the *Pædobaptists* agree, that Faith is required in the Adult to qualify them for that Ordinance; but I see no Necessity for such a Qualification, if their reasoning from this Text is sound, for the Apostle puts the Child and the unbelieving Parent upon an equal Foot: the one is holy, and the other is sanctified, which must mean the same thing.

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thing. And therefore, if your Pastor will deny Baptism to a Man or Woman without Faith, notwithstanding they may be married to a Believer : so by the same Rule (if he acts consistently) he must deny Baptism to a Child without Faith, notwithstanding it is born of a Believer.

The third Text, which your Pastor brings to prove the Continuance of Infants Privileges, is *Acts* ii. 39. For the Promise is to you and your Children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. From whence he argues thus ; " Now nothing could encourage them more than to be assured that upon an unfeigned Repentance, and their becoming Christ's Disciples, they should obtain the Remission of their Sins, and all those Benefits for themselves and their Children too, that were included in, and secured by the Covenant made with Abraham, or the Covenant of Grace ; and moreover, that they should be capable of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, and even of those miraculous ones which they were Witnesses of".

According to this Definition, there were several distinct Things which the Jews were to obtain for themselves and their Children, upon an unfeigned Repentance, and their becoming Christ's Disciples : As,

1. Remission of Sins.
2. Gifts of the Holy Ghost.
3. The Benefits of the Covenant of Grace.

But I cannot understand which of these the Jewish Infants were to receive upon their Parent's Obedience ; they could not receive Remission of actual Sins, for they could commit none, without the Use of Reason, and they could not receive Remission of original Sin because that would be attended with real Holiness and internal Purity, which none will pretend to be the Case, at least not universally.

And as to the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, the Apostle sums them up in *1 Cor. xii. 8.—10.* For to one is given by the Spirit the Word of Wisdom ; to another the Word of Knowledge by the same Spirit. To another Faith by the same Spirit : To another the Gifts of Healing by the same Spirit : To another the working of Miracles, to another Prophecy, to another discerning of Spirits, to another divers kinds of Tongues, to another the Interpretation of Tongues.

Now here are the Saving, the Edifying, and the miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghost : and which of these can an

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Infant be capable of receiving, by the Faith and Repentance of its Parents? For as to the Gifts of Miracles, or those for the edifying the Church, there is no rational Man can think Infants capable of receiving them; and indeed, I cannot believe your Pastor thinks so; and as to the saving Gift, such as Faith, this likewise produces real Holiness, and internal Purity, and therefore cannot come under your Pastor's Meaning: It remains then to find out what these Benefits of the Covenant of Grace are, which he does mean; but he says elsewhere they are all needful Supplies of Grace here, and Glory hereafter: but this likewise is real Holiness, and internal Purity, which he denies can come by the Parent's Faith: therefore what these Benefits are, must still remain an unfolded Mystery.

So that it remains, that these Benefits of the Covenant of Grace, so often asserted by your Pastor, to be convey'd by the Parent's Faith to the Children, and which he has no sooner explain'd, but immediately contradicts, are not to be found either in Scripture, Reason, or Experience: For my own Part, I believe the Apostle's Meaning is to be confin'd to *Joel's Prophecy*, where God promises these miraculous Gifts; and the more so, because he repeats it in *ver. 16—18.* and encourages his Hearers to Faith and Repentance: that they might be Partakers of them, as they saw the believing Disciples were.

In the next Passage, your Pastor asserts, "That this Promise is not confin'd to those only, who are or shall be actually called of God". But how does this appear? if it be meant of the miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghost, they were not usually given to the uncalled, and never to Infants.

The fourth Text brought to prove the Continuance of Children's Privileges, is *Rom. 11. 20.* Because of Unbelief they were broken off, from which your Pastor observes, "When our Saviour, the promised Messiah came, some of them received him in that Character, and declared themselves Believers; and all such, together with their Infant Seed, continued related to God as his People, and were in Covenant with him as under the former Dispensation. The Children of such Believers could not be broken off, because they could not be charg'd with Unbelief, nor be guilty of it: and they could not be rejected upon their Parent's Account, because these are supposed to be Believers". On this I cannot but remark, that,

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Your Pastor says, in Page the 17th, he is pleading the Cause of Christian Children, but here it seems to be at the Expence of the *Jewish* Children, whom he has effectually pleaded against, for upon his Principles, they were in Covenant with God before our Saviour came, but upon his coming, and their Parent's rejecting him, they (the Infants) forfeited their Covenant Relation; so that according to this, it would have been so far better for the greater Number of the poor *Jewish* Infants, that Christ had never came into the World; because by his coming it gave an Opportunity to their Parents to reject him, and thereby occasion their being cast out of the Covenant of Grace. But he says, he means the believing *Jew's* Children were continued in Covenant with God by Virtue of their Parent's Faith in Christ: but I cannot see what Advantage in this Respect, these Infants could have by Christ's coming, if it was only a Continuance of their Privileges without any Addition; but perhaps he will say, when they grew up, they had the additional Privilege of hearing the New Testament: so have Children that never were baptized, as I have hinted before.

But let it be remembred, that the Children of the *Jews* have at this Day, the same real Privileges, they ever had, they are circumcised the eighth Day, and when they grow up they hear the Scriptures of the Old Testament, which the Apostle tells us, was one of their chief Advantages; *Rom. ii. 2.* therefore, when he says, the *Gentiles* were grafted in, he must mean the Adult among the *Romans*, and others, who received the glorious Gospel of Christ, and had the Advantage of discovering by the same, the clear Method of Salvation, Grace, and Immortality, which it brings to light: which Infants are incapable of whilst destitute of the Use of Reason.

If it should be objected to this, we know not but God may reveal his Grace to Infants before the Exercise of Reason, in a Manner which we know not of, and therefore they ought to be baptized, (as I have heard weak People talk) this is but a chimerical Way of reasoning, and we ought to stay until we know if not the Manner of his revealing his Grace, yet the Matter of it, by its Fruits, before we baptize them; for Ministers are but Men, who must administer that Ordinance, and they know not the Subjects of Faith, but by their Fruits.

Thus I have considered all your Pastor's Reasons for *Infant-Baptism*, from the *Abrahamic* Covenant, and find them inconclusive.

clusive. He goes on to give his Reasons for *Infant-Baptism* from Circumcision; the first is,

" That at our Saviour's coming, he was about to dissolve the ceremonial Law; and Circumcision being a painful and bloody Rite, and confin'd to the Jewish Church, it was proper to lay it aside in favour of Christ's Disciples, who were called to take his Yoke and Burden upon them, which was to be easy and light".

The Second is, " It is reasonable to think, that when Circumcision was laid aside, so as no longer to be the initiating Rite; our Saviour would make Choice of some other, and as outward and visible Signs, are apt to strike and affect us, it might have been a great Obstruction to the Spread of the Gospel, if there had been no visible Way appointed by our Saviour for the solemn Admission of themselves and their Children into his Kingdom; so that when he ordered Circumcision to be set aside, it might have been expected that he would appoint another Rite to supply its Place".

I am persuaded, if your Pastor had remember'd, by what Spirit the true Gospel is propagated, he would not have insinuated that it may meet with Obstruction for want of a striking Sign; but if striking and affecting Signs are necessary, they must needs be more striking at the Baptism of a humble penitent Believer, than at the Sprinkling of a thoughtless Infant.

Again, he says, " It is not only reasonable to suppose that he would do so; but it is certain that he has actually done it, and that when Circumcision was disfused, Baptism was the Rite appointed by which Persons were to be received as Members of his Church and Kingdom. Accordingly, we are said to be baptized into Christ, and thereby to put on Christ, Gal. iii. 27. And we find, that as soon as any made a Profession of Christianity, they were admitted into the Church by that Sacrament, not being look'd upon as belonging to it before.

Here your Pastor confesses, when any in Scripture were admitted into the Church by the Sacrament (as he calls it) of Baptism, they made a Profession of Faith before they were baptized, which is all that the *Baptists* contend for, as to the Subjects of *Baptism*; and 'tis Pity all the Christian Churches don't return to that Scripture Practice. But if none were look'd upon as belonging to the Church before Baptism, Timothy must be baptized before he was circumcised, for he

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is said to be a Disciple, *Acts* xvi. 1. and therefore a Church-Member ; and if *Baptism* came in the Room of Circumcision, how came the Apostle *Paul* to circumcise him after he was baptized ? which would have been rendering his Baptism invalid, if the Apostle had thus inverted their Order ; which is a plain Proof by the Way, that *Baptism* had no Regard to Circumcision. Besides, we know that many of the believing Jews circumcised their Children after their own Baptism, under the Eyes of *Peter*, *James*, *John*, and the other Apostles, as may be seen, *Acts* xxi. 21 — 24. who could not allow it without Hypocrify, if *Baptism* came in the Room of Circumcision.

But the fourth Reason for this Point is very remarkable for the Interpretation of Scripture. " Hence it is, says he, plain, " that *Baptism* may be properly said to come in the Room " of Circumcision ; for so it did, not as the Antitype suc- " ceeded in the Place of the Type, but as one positive Insti- " tution succeeds in the Place of another. And upon that " Account, *Baptism* is called by the Apostle Circumcision, " *Colos.* ii. 11, 12. Ye are circumcised with the Circum- " cision made without Hands, in putting off the Body of " the Sins of the Flesh by the Circumcision of Christ buried " with him in *Baptism*, &c. By the Circumcision of " Christ here cannot be meant his own Personal Circumcision, " which was made with Hands, but *Baptism* which is a Rite " of Initiation to Christians as Circumcision was to the " Jews".

Here I suppose your Pastor means *Water-Baptism*, because he calls it a Rite. But *Baptism* cannot be called Circumcision, because it is said to put off the Body of the Sins of the Flesh, and the *Baptists* do not pretend, that *Water-Baptism* has that Efficacy : besides, it is said to be made without Hands, and I never heard either the *Pædobaptists*, or *Baptists*, baptized without Hands. Neither do I believe that the personal Circumcision of Christ is intended. But the true Meaning of the Apostle I take to be this ; He had been warning the *Colossians* in their Researches after God, and getting rid of Sin, not to make Use of the Heathen Religion, which was built upon Philosophy, and vain Deceit ; because in Christ the Fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily, and they were compleat in him. And for the same Reasons, not to observe the Peculiarities of the Religion of the *Jews*, which was founded upon Circumcision : because they

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(the Christians) were circumcised with a more noble Circumcision, namely the powerful Operation of his Holy Spirit, whereby not a Part only, but the whole Body of Sin, as to its Dominion and Guilt, is cut off. And then, according to his usual Manner, by a Transition of Argument, he puts them in mind, that by *Baptism* they professed to be buried with Christ, to the *Gentile* and *Jewish* Religion, as well as to the Vanities and Pomp of the World.

Your Pastor reasons fifthly, “ As it was the Will of God, “ that Infants should be taken into his Church and Covenant “ formerly, and they were accordingly circumcised ; and as “ their Privileges were never taken from them, so it may, “ with the greatest Reason be concluded, that it was alto-“ gether agreeable to our Saviour’s Mind, that the Infants of “ Believers under the Gospel Dispensation, should be taken “ into the Christian Church and Covenant, and therefore “ baptized, the only Way by which he has directed that to “ be done”.

As to Infant’s Privileges being never taken from them, the *Baptists* never said they were ; and I have before proved, that their unbaptized Children have as many or more Privileges than the *Pædobaptists*, therefore this is of no Force ; and as to Baptism being the only Way of taking Persons into the Covenant, if they are not there and feel the regenerating Power of the Holy Ghost, before the Administration of that Ordinance, their Baptism will be of no Use to them, which your Pastor confesses in Page 37th, as shall be shewn hereafter. But he concludes this Part of the Argument with this Remark : “ Upon these Grounds I am fully convinced, the “ Practice of the *Pædobaptists* may be well defended ; though “ some have taken it upon them to affirm, with the utmost “ Confidence, that *Infant-Baptism* is no Institution of Christ, “ and others, against Decency and good Manners, have “ given themselves a Liberty to speak of it in Language of “ Contempt”.

It must be confessed, that the Rules of good Manners and Decency, ought to be observed by every Denomination of religious Societies towards each other : and without recriminating on the *Pædobaptists*, if some unadvised *Baptists* have behaved contrary to those Rules, they are highly to be blamed, but that should not be charged on their Body, it being a favourite Principle with them, that every Man ought to be allowed the utmost Latitude of Conscience in the Worship

of God, when it is consistent with the Safety of other Men Persons and worldly Goods. But as to the other Part of the Observation, for any thing your Pastor has said hitherto, I am fully convinced that the *Baptists* have no Reason, but to continue to affirm with the utmost Confidence, that *Infant-Baptism* is no Institution of Christ.

And whereas your Pastor says, That Baptism comes in the room of Circumcision, not as the Antitype succeeds in the Place of the Type, (which was warily minded) but as one positive Institution succeeds in the Place of another; the Text which he brings to prove it, being proved to have a Meaning widely different from it, the *Baptists* may take the Liberty utterly to deny his Proposition; and should he allow that Circumcision was a Type of Baptism, and that Abraham's fleshly Seed was a Type of his spiritual, it will compleatly destroy *Infant-Baptism*, except we make the Ordinances of the Gospel as carnal as those under the Law. For thus I would reason;

If the Children of spiritual *Israel* are to be baptized, because the Children of literal *Israel* were circumcised, who are the Children of spiritual *Israel*? who but they whose Hearts are circumcised by the Holy Ghost, to keep the Law of Christ: *For he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and Circumcision is that of the Heart in the Spirit, and not in the Letter, whose Praise is not of Men but of God.* Rom. ii. 29. Again,

If Abraham's promised Children are to be baptized, because his fleshly Children were circumcised; who are his promised Children? but they who have Faith in Christ Jesus. For says the Apostle, If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's Seed; and Heirs according to the Promise. Gal. iii. 29. Or thus,

If Abraham's New Testament Seed are to be baptized, because his Old Testament Infants were circumcised, who are his New Testament Seed? but they who can relish the New Testament Food. As new born Babes desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby. 1 Pet. ii. 2. Now Infants being incapable of this are not the Subjects of Baptism.

But to proceed, your Member offers some Objections, Page 23. against *Infant-Baptism*, and the first is a very material one. "I cannot say he, find that there is any express Command in the New Testament for baptizing Infants."

" and as there is not, it must, I think, be done without sufficient Authority".

To which your Pastor answers, " I cannot apprehend that there was any Need of our Saviour's saying in so many Words that Infants should be baptized. He well knew that they had all along been admitted into the Jewish Church by Circumcision, and that they were always taken into Covenant, as well as their Parents. Besides, it has been made appear by Men of the first Rank for Learning, and such as well understood the Customs of the Jews, that they admitted the Infants of their Profelytes into their Church by Baptism as well as by Circumcision. What Warrant they had for so doing is not the Question ; but if it was their Manner, when our Lord gave a Commission to his Apostles to go and disciple all Nations, baptizing them, had he intended to except Infants, he would certainly have told them so, that they might not mistake his Orders and act contrary to them. — — And the Baptists do grant, that there is no express Prohibition of Infant-Baptism to be found in the New Testament, we may conclude, that the Apostles understood the Commission which they had to go and profelyte the Nations, as meaning, that they should do by their Profelytes as the Jews did, that is to say, admit their Children as well as themselves into the Church, and so baptize them ; and this it is supposed they would do, though they had no express Command about it, seeing their Master never forbid it".

As to the Practice of the Jews baptizing the Infants of the profelited Gentiles, if such a Custom prevailed, we know it was not from God, because it is no where to be found in Scripture ; and the Apostles well knew they durst not take any Authority from Men, their Master every where warning them against it.

But as to the Apostles mistaking our Saviour's Commission, it was not so doubtful as to be mistaken, for in giving it he charged them and all their Followers, to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them, Mat. xxviii. 20. which was a strict Prohibition of every thing else, but his Commands and Example ; and his Example of not ordering those Children to be baptized (as your Pastor confesses) which he took in his Arms, was a full Explanation of his Commission to his Apostles ; and if Actions are allowed to speak louder than

than Words, this was a louder forbidding of *Infant-Baptism*, than Words could express it.

If a Prince's Ambassador who had received a Command to observe his Master's Instructions, should go beyond those Instructions, and do things which were not commanded, because they were not forbidden, he would, I believe, receive but little Thanks for the same. If it should be objected to this, " we know not all that our Saviour commanded his Apostles". Let it be remembred, that all *Protestants* take the written Word only, for their Faith and Practice.

But his next Reason as to it's not being commanded is, " When any Point may be made appear by undeniable Consequences from Scripture, it ought to be admitted, though no express Words can be brought for the Proof of it. — Our blessed Saviour proved the important Doctrine of the Resurrection against the Sadduces, by Consequence from the Covenant made with *Abraham*, and surely we ought to admit of such Proofs as he thought conclusive".

Here I would observe, that nothing has alter'd the Face of Religion so much as Consequences, and therefore this Way of Reasoning is extremely dangerous, and ought never to be practised but where there are no Facts, either for, or against the Question proposed, (which was the Case of our Lord's Argument with the Sadduces) and then we may safely draw Consequences, provided they are close and undeniable. But I apprehend that the Consequences drawn here for *Infant-Baptism*, are not only wide and deniable, but in manifest Opposition to Facts; for we are certain that the Adult were baptized, which cannot be said of Infants: But if your Pastor can prove *Infant-Baptism*, by such undeniable Consequence as our blessed Saviour brought, when he proved that *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob* were then living, he will silence the *Baptists*, otherwise they must still take the Liberty to deny it.

But his third Reason is, " The *Baptists* themselves cannot say that they have express Words of Scripture to warrant every thing that they maintain and practice, and in several Cases, which I could mention, their Proofs are only consequential. For instance, they (the greatest Number of them I mean) religiously observe the first Day of the Week as the Christian Sabbath, and think (as we do) that there is a sufficient Foundation in the New Testament for

" for the Regard that is paid to it : But they allow (and so
 " must all) that we are no where expressly commanded to
 " keep that Day holy. — — I shall mention Dipping ;
 " This they represent as essential to true Baptism ; but how
 " do they prove it ? *John*, say they, baptized in *Enon* near to
 " *Salim*, because there was much Water there. Christ
 " when he was baptized, is said to go up straitway out of the
 " Water. And when *Philip* baptized the Eunuch, we read
 " that they went down both into the Water, &c. There-
 " fore dipping of the whole Body is the proper Mode of
 " Baptism, and there can be no other. Now pray, why
 " do they require an express Command for baptizing Chil-
 " dren, when it is so obvious they have Recourse to Conse-
 " quences, in Defence of their own Tenets"?

To this I reply, if it is closely considered, it will appear, that the first Day Sabbath, has more than wide Consequences to support it ; for there are Examples which will justify the Observance of it. Read *Act*s xx. 6, 7 — and came to Troas in five Days, where we abode seven Days ; and upon the first Day of the Week, when the Disciples came together to break Bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the Morrow, and continued his Speech until Midnight. This Example, if there were no other, the greater Number of the Baptists think sufficient to justify them in meeting together on the first Day of the Week, for their religious Exercises of Preaching and breaking of Bread : and if your Pastor can shew but one such Example of *Infant-Baptism*, it will be sufficient.

To the second Part of this Paragraph, wherein he attempts to shew, " That the Baptists take up their Practice of Dipping, from the Relation of the Persons baptized going down into, and coming up out of the Water", it must be confessed, these are glaring Consequences, on the Side of the Baptists ; but they have still more than these, for they think it impossible to represent the Burial and Resurrection of their Lord and Master Jesus Christ without it. And that they are not beholding to mere Consequences for their Practice, is evident from the proper natural meaning of the Word Baptize, which may well be rendered in English Dip or Immerge, and then the Account runs thus ; *John* was Dipping in *Enon* near to *Salim*, because there was much Water there. *Jesus* when he was Dipped, went up straightway out of the Water. And they went down both into

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the Water, both *Philip* and the Eunuch, and he *Dipped* him : For the Truth of this Remark, I appeal to the Consciences of all knowing learned Men, as well *Pædobaptists* as others.

Moreover, it is surprising, to see what Differences there are amongst the *Pædobaptists* themselves, as to these unforbidden Consequences ; some of them use Cream, Oil, Salt and Spittle in Baptism, and say, it is from Consequence, and no where forbidden in Scripture. Others exclaim against this, as without Command or Example, and yet use the Sign of the Cross.

Again, your Member objects, “ Is it not strange that we should have no express mention made of any Children that were Baptized by the Apostles ? if they understood their Commission as a Warrant for that Practice, and how can it be accounted for, that there should not be so much as one plain Example in its Favour ? To which your Pastor answers ”,

“ I cannot see that we could reasonably expect to have any such Instances recorded, as you speak of in the Acts of the Apostles. Whoever observes the Tenor of that History (says a learned Author) and considers the State of those Times, will perceive that St. Luke’s Aim is to give a summary Account of the main and principal Passages of their Lives, and of those Passages especially, in which they found the greatest Opposition, and in such a History (which is but short in all) who can look for an Account of what Children they baptized ” ?

To this it may be replied, St. Luke says, *Acts* viii. 12. They were baptized both Men and Women, and is it not wonderful, that when the Evangelist made a Distinction betwixt them, he had not mentioned the Children likewise, if there were any ? But if there may be good Reasons why there should be no Instance of *Infant-Baptism* in the Acts of the Apostles, there is no Reason why there should be none in all the Scripture ; considering the holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the only Rule of our Faith and Obedience.

The next thing advanced is very extraordinary, “ We read, says your Pastor, of Families that were baptized. It is true, we cannot prove that there were any Infants belonging to them, nor can the Baptists prove that there were none ; and so we have as much Right to draw a Conclusion

clusion from thence in favour of our Practice, as they can have against it".

I think the Design of your Pastor here is to prove *Infant-Baptism*, and says, there were Families baptized, and yet owns he cannot prove there were any Infants belonging to them, but refers it to the Baptists to prove a Negative; but they always apprehend, that he which asserts an Affirmative ought to prove it, or lose the Argument. And therefore this being a new Way of arguing, they think themselves safe, that they can prove the Adult were baptized, but must continue to deny that Infants were, until better Proof is brought for it, than is to be found in this Passage.

And the next is as remarkable, being in much the same Terms, "They (the Baptists) are not able to produce any Example in the New Testament of Persons baptized at Age, whose Parents were Christians when they were born". If by Christians he means Believers, *Mary* the Mother of our Lord, *Zacharias* and *Elizabeth* were of this Number. But he goes on, "We have sufficient Proof, that *Infant-Baptism* was customary soon after the Apostles Days, (as I shall shew you presently) from whence we may with great Probability infer, that it was taken from them".

Here we ought to be very cautious, least we bring in dangerous Principles and Practices, which we have sufficient Proof were in the Churches soon after the Apostles Days; therefore it is safest to adhere to Scripture and the Apostles Days only.

Your Member goes on to object, "The Commission given by our Saviour to his Apostles, directs them to go and teach all Nations, baptizing them, &c. by which it appears, that Teaching was to precede *Baptism*: The same may be said of Faith, according to what we read, *Mark* xvi. 16. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved".

Here your Pastor wisely evades what his *Pædobaptist* Brethren have often urged about teaching all Nations; and therefore as he does not think fit to mention it, I shall not insist on it. But he says, "That which I observe is, that when Strangers were to be proselyted to Christianity, it was necessary that such as were capable of being taught, should be inform'd what the Religion was, which they were persuaded to imbrace, and those who were born and bred either *Jews* or *Heathens* were to be instructed, before

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" their Admission into the Christian Society ; but it does
" not follow from hence, that after they had been admitted,
" their Infant Seed were refused Baptism, seeing they had
" a Right to a Sacramental Initiation into the Church, of
" which their Parents were Members, as I have already
" made appear".

That Infants have a Right to Baptism from their Parents Faith, from what he has said as yet, I must take Leave to say, does not appear, at least to me : And as to Strangers being at that time to be proselyted to Christianity, and that *Jews* and *Heathens* were to be instructed before their Admission into the Christian Society : It is my Opinion, that then and at this time also, all Persons born and bred *Jews*, *Heathens*, or nominal *Christians*, being Strangers to the saving Knowledge of Christ by Nature, ought to be instructed ; and not only so, but to be examined and watched over, to see if the Spirit of God has made those Instructions successful to their spiritual Advantage, before they are baptized and admitted into Church Communion ; for I apprehend, that God is no Respecter of Persons, for the Sake of their Parents ; but in every Nation, he that is a true Believer, is the only Person fit for holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper. And therefore *Jews*, *Heathens* and nominal *Christians*, are all alike in the Sight of God, until his Spirit has plucked them as Brands out of the Burning, by forming Christ in their Hearts.

Your Member farther objects, " That Infants are not capable of all the Ends of Baptism, and therefore not proper Subjects of it". To which the Pastor answers, " That they are as capable of the Ends of it, as they were of Circumcision heretofore : Because,

1. " It was God's own Appointment".

This it must be confessed is a good Reason for Circumcision ; but it still remains to be proved that God appointed *Infant-Baptism*, and therefore is nothing to the Purpose.

His second Reason is, " Our blessed Saviour himself was you know, baptized, and yet you can't say that he was capable of every End of the Baptism which he received"

And what then, If the Baptism of our blessed Saviour answered all its designed Ends, which was to fulfil all Righteousness. That is to obey the Commands of God, to be an Example to others ; and particularly to be manifested to the World that he was the Messiah, by the Deification of the Holy Ghost.

Surely

Surely your Pastor's bringing the Baptism of our blessed Saviour, as a parallel Case here, is beside the Argument.

But he says, thirdly, "That some of the chief Ends of Baptism are answer'd, when Infants are the Subjects, is undeniable. — It is true, they do not understand the Nature, nor the Terms and Advantages of the Covenant into which they are entred; nor can they make any Profession of Faith and Repentance; nor live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World; such things as these it is granted they cannot do. But, doubtless, they may be solemnly admitted to the Society of Christians, and to the Rights and Privileges of that Body, which is the Church".

For my Part, I always understood, that Baptism was an outward and visible Sign, of an inward and spiritual Grace, and that the inward Graces are Faith and Repentance, accompanied with Sobriety, Righteousness and Godliness. But these your Pastor grants that Infants have not; to what End then are they baptized? Why, he says, "It is to be solemnly admitted into the Society of Christians". But what Society can an Infant of a Week, a Month, or a Year old, have with Christians as such: Do the Society of Christians consist of such trifling Experience, as is to be communicated to an Infant? And can an Infant raise those social Ideas in a Christian's Mind, which are tinctured with the Conversation of Heaven, a Description of which is given us by the Psalmist: Come and hear all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my Soul, *Psal. lxvi. 16.* Therefore it is worth the Enquiry of Christians, whether their Christian Society with Infants, has any Foundation: and as to any other Privileges, I have before shewn that baptized Infants have no more than what are common to others. But your Pastor adds, "Who will take it upon them to say, that they may not be devoted to God; and that they are not capable of being regenerated, adopted and saved".

The Baptists will not take upon them to say, that they may not be devoted to God; but then they say, it ought to be done in God's own Way, not in the Way of Men's Invention. And who of your Pastor's Sentiments will take it upon him to say, *what Children are regenerated, and adopted, and by what Marks they are to be known, in order to their being baptized.* At the same time I am free to declare, that whoever takes it upon him to baptize any one

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without the visible Signs of Regeneration, and Adoption abuses that sacred Ordinance.

I heartily agree with your Pastor, " That it does not become an honest and sincere Man, to argue for any Point in Religion in a Way which he sees or suspects to be inconclusive, that he may thereby impose upon the more ignorant People, and whoever does so, is a Prevaricator in the things of God".

Your Member next demands, " Some of these Authorities by which your Pastor supports his Practice, and such as have not been contested, and may be depended upon To which he consents, and relates an Account of a Assembly of Bishops, about one hundred and fifty Years after the Death of St. John the Apostle ; when a Question arose at what time Infants ought to be baptized ; from whence he infers, that it was a Custom in those Days and supposes that some of those sixty-six Bishops which composed that Assembly might be fifty or three-score Years old, and their Fathers had no Apprehension of its being a human Institution, which carries the Practice up to one hundred Years after St. John's Death ; and that Austin nor Pelagus his Adversary ever heard of its being denied, and that for the first four hundred Years it was never read by Mr. Wall (who has exactly considered the Testimony and Authority of almost every antient Writer, that has said any thing upon this Subject) of any Society of Men, so thinking and so practising, except two, namely, Tertullian and Gregory ; and so it continued until about the Year 1130, when a Set among the Walldenses declared against it, who dwindled and disappeared until the Rising of the German Anti-pædobaptists, 1522". And now your Pastor remarks upon these Accounts thus ;

" That had it not been agreeable to the Mind of Christ, that Infants should be baptized, it is very strange that the Churches in every Age should be permitted to go so generally into that Practice". — And setting aside angry Words, he proceeds, " Surely it must be Matter of great Surprise, that such a Practice should be suffered to prevail, from the Beginning to this Day, among God's faithful People, and especially considering our Saviour's Promise, John vii. 17. If any Man will do his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine whether it be of God".

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But, your Pastor makes these Remarks, on those Accounts only as Supports to *Infant-Baptism*, not as Foundations, which was wisely observed in a good Protestant. And now give me Leave to make some Remarks upon these Authorities.

Here is first Antiquity pleaded, the highest of which is one hundred Years after St. John's Death ; but there are worse Principles and Practices than *Infant-Baptism*, which may plead earlier Antiquity than this, even in the Apostle *John's Life*, as may be seen in the *Revelation*, Chap. ii. and iii. and all the other Apostles describe Errors, and Heresies, which were then crept into the Churches, and which they bore their Testimony against, as St. Paul against the *Legalist*, *Sadducees*, &c. the Apostles *James*, *Peter* and *Jude*, against the *Anitnomian Libertines*, &c. therefore if these horrid Doctrines got Footing in the Churches in those early Days, it is no Wonder if the lesser Error of *Infant-Baptism*, found a Place after the Apostles Death.

Again, Secondly, here is the Custom of the Churches for many Ages pleaded, for this Practice : But this is not only a doubtful, but a dangerous Way of arguing ; for as much might be said for the Popes Supremacy continued for so many Ages, and owned no doubt, by some of God's faithful People, unless we rashly condemn all the Western Churches, for a thousand Years together, which would be uncharitable : And as to that Text in *John* vii. 17. If any Man will do his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine whether it be of God. I apprehend our Saviour there means fundamental Doctrines only, which all the Faithful must know, in order to their being saved ; for as to other things, the Protestant Churches all agree, that even the Faithful themselves may possibly err ; especially if they keep not close to God's Word. Those therefore are least liable to Mistakes, who adhere to that unerring Standard, without running for Support to any other Antiquity or Custom whatsoever.

But your Pastor adds, as his last Argument for *Infant-Baptism* : " That Families baptized in Infancy, have generally been the Nurseries of the Churches of Christ. From these there has been a Supply of such Members, as have been an Ornament and an Honour to their Profession, and kept up Religion in its Life and Power. These have furnished a Number of eminently pious, learned, and laborious Ministers, who with an unwearied Zeal, supported

" the

“ the Interest of Christ in the World, (and when they have
 “ been called to it) bravely suffered in Defence of the glo-
 “ rious Cause”.

And if he had added, that there are now excellent Christians, (who for want of better Information) practice *Infant-Baptism*, the *Baptists* heartily agree to it. But then all this is no Reason for the Truth of that Practice ; for the same may be pleaded against *Pædobaptism* in General, as that Families baptized in Infancy, have generally been the Nurseries of Popery, &c. Besides, the same may be said by the *Baptists*, that from Families not baptized till adult, there have been a Supply of such Members as have been an Ornament and an Honour to their Profession, and kept up Religion in its Life and Power. And as to the suffering Part of the Argument, the *Baptists* and *Papists* have a Claim to it as well as others ; for among the former there have been, and are now, many Ministers eminently pious, learned and laborious ; and some in Times past, have bravely suffered in the glorious Cause.

And among the *Papists* there have been excellent Ministers, such as *Erasmus*, *Thomas a Kempis*, *Baius*, *Jansenius*, *Quesnelle*, &c. who all owned the Pope's Supremacy ; and there have been *Papists* who have suffered for the same ; but that has not proved it true. Therefore Piety or Sufferings are but doubtful Arguments for Truth, unless it is grounded on God's unerring Word.

Thus I have traced this long perplexed Argument of *Infant-Baptism*, through all its Windings, which for the Sake of some Readers, I shall endeavour to contract, as it appears to me, into a narrow Compass, that at one View, we may see the Whole Force of it. “ God made a Covenant with *Abraham* and his Literal Seed : That he would be their God, to give them not only a suitable Provision in this World, but all needful Supplies of Grace here, and Glory hereafter : To be their Benefactor, their Shield, their Portion, their Reward in this and the next Life : To give them the Promise of the Spirit : That they should be confirm'd in Christ, Be Heirs of their Fathers Faith : That their Hearts should be circumcised : That this Covenant should be everlasting : That the Law should not disanul it, And therefore as of this Covenant, God Commanded them all in Infancy to be circumcised, to put them into this Covenant of Grace. And that now Believers standing in the same

“ Capacity

“ Capacity to their Children, as *Abraham* did to his, they ought to baptize them in Infancy, and so put them into the same Covenant of Grace, because Baptism came in the Room of Circumcision”.

Now this being the Sum of what your Pastor has advanced, (and I dare say his Readers will agree with me that it is so,) I find it to be an Argument full of Inconsistency with the Scripture, Self-Contradiction, and false Conclusions.

Inconsistent with Scripture, because many of *Abraham's* Children were cut off in the midst of their Sins, and therefore never received all needful Supplies of Grace here, in order for Glory hereafter. Self-Contradiction, in saying they have all needful Supplies of Grace, and yet allows that Persons may sin themselves out of this Covenant, which if it is possible thus to do, they could not have all those needful Supplies of Grace, which are necessary for standing.

And false Conclusions, to say that all the Children of *Abraham* were circumcised, because they were Heirs of his Faith, whereas many of them never had any true Faith. Likewise to insinuate that Believers now stand in the same Capacity to their Infants, that *Abraham* did to his, as the Head of a Church; whereas, there is no such Position in all the New Testament: Therefore this Foundation, upon which *Infant-Baptism* is built, being removed, the Superstructure must necessarily fall.

But before I leave this Point, I must take Leave to offer some Objections against *Infant-Baptism* in General, as it is founded upon your Pastor's Principles.

First, The *Pædobaptists* are unresolved among themselves, what Infants ought to be baptized. And without entring into the Controversy, which subsists betwixt the different Denominations of the *Pædobaptists*, concerning who are true Believers. I shall only observe how they differ about the Operation of that (pretended) fœderal Holiness, which Children receive from their Parents. Some apprehend, that if the immediate Father and Mother are profane it cuts off the fœderal Holiness, and disqualifies the Child for Baptism, and will admit none to that Ordinance, but those whose Father or Mother is a Church Member, and a Receiver of the Lord's Supper. Others deny this, and allow that if the distant Predecessor, as Grandfather, or Grandmother, &c. was

was a Church Member, the foederal Holiness is convey'd through the prophane Parent to the Child, and qualifies it for Baptism. Now this Perplexity militates strongly against *Infant-Baptism*, and is an insuperable Difficulty on that Side of the Question. Whereas the *Baptists* Practice in this Case is plain and easy, (like all the Ways of God.) Believe and be Baptized according to the Commandment.

Secondly, If Infants are the Subjects of *Baptism*, why are they not Partakers of the Lord's Table? If they are in the Covenant of Grace, made betwixt God and them through Christ, why are they not brought to commemorate the Blood of that Covenant? And all the *Pædobaptists* agree here, by their Practice, that Infants are not Subjects of this Ordinance; but has our blessed Saviour withheld his Ordinances from some of his Members, and allow'd them to others? Has he not said to his Disciples, drink ye all of it? *Matt. xxvi. 27.*

Thirdly, If the *Pædobaptists* baptize their Infants because Abraham's Infants were circumcised: Why don't they baptize their Infant Slaves? for all Abraham's Slaves, Infant and Adult were circumcised. And why don't the rich *Pædobaptists* buy Slaves for Baptism? for if it will enter them into that Covenant where they shall have all needful Supplies of Grace here, and Glory hereafter, it must needs be worth their Purchase.

If these Objections are duly weighed, it is worth our Consideration, whether they do not reduce *Infant-Baptism* to an Absurdity? at least upon your Pastor's Principles.

But your Member next desires, "Your Pastor's thoughts concerning the Mode of Baptism" which he answers,

1. "When it is consistent with Health, and provided a due Regard be paid to an Ordinance of Christ, by managing every thing belonging to it with decorum and Solemnity, Dipping may doubtless be used Baptism".

It was never known that Baptism by Dipping hurt the Health of any Person in anyason, and as to Decorum and Solemnity, they are Rules which the *Baptists* always attend to in this Ordinance; but

2. "I would not prefer to deny, that to have been a Custom in the first Ages of the Church, and in hot Countries; for I believe this is now generally allowed".

If your Pastor means here the Ages exclusive of the Apostles Days, then they ought not to be called the first Ages.

ore I must persuade my self, that he includes in them the Age of the Apostles themselves : and if it was their Custom, I am surprised that he should say any more about the Mode of Baptism ; for I think the Custom of the Apostles ought to be the Standard of all true Churches.

Thirdly, " It can never be proved, that our Saviour or his Apostles delivered any Precept or Directions about it".

But if it was the Custom of our blessed Saviour and his Apostles, there was no need of any further Directions about it, their Examples being binding to the Conscience of all serious Christians.

Fourthly, " Nor is it so evident as they apprehend it to be, that all we read of in Scripture; who were baptised were plunged in the Water".

It were to be wished your Pastor had explained himself above, about the first Ages of the Church, whether he meant to exclude the Apostles Age, and if he does, neither the *Baptists* nor any serious Christians, (as I hinted before) ought to have so much Regard to any Age besides for their Practice. But if he means the Apostolic Days, it will be a Difficulty to reconcile this to that above, for these he says it is generally allowed that Dipping was the Custom, and he does not deny it ; and yet here he says it is not evident. But to allow Facts to be true without Evidence, is a very suspicious Method of Reasoning, and which ought to be rejected in an argument. But here he supposes that the three thousand mentioned, *Act*. ii. " were not likely to be dipped in a Part of a Day" ; therefore I suppose he would infer that they were Sprinkled, or had Water poured on them, as a quicker Method. But if we consider, that our Lord and Seventy preaching Disciples besides the Twelve Apostles, ~~and~~ they were all present, this mighty Difficulty will vanish ; ~~and~~ the whole three Thousand did not amount to forty Persons ~~so~~ each Disciple to baptize, which might be easily performed by Dipping within the Space of Time mentioned. Beside Baptism by Dipping is as soon perform'd as by Sprinkling or Pouring. But he thinks, " They must be naked, as having no Change of Apparel" ; but it is very unreasonable to think, that the devout Jews, who could bear the Expence of travelling from every Nation under Heaven to Jerusalem, to worship at the Feast of Pentecost, had not Change of Apparel, both for themselves and their poor Brethren. He adds, when Paul was so weak after

" three Days fasting, one can hardly believe, that when " he was baptized, he was dipped in cold Water". But when *Paul* was so fervent in his Devotion at his first Conversion, as to abstain from Food three Days, one can hardly believe, that he would make his Weakness an Argument with himself not to follow his Lords Example, for fear of his catching Cold. And as to the Jaylor and his Family being " baptized in the Prison", it is a manifest Mistake, for the Text says, ver. 30. he brought them out as his first Act of Kindness, ver. 32. they preached in his House, then ver. 33. He washed their Stripes and was baptized, afterwards ver. 34. he brought them into his House again, and we cannot suppose that he had them out of his House into the Prison again to baptize them ; therefore they were baptized neither in the Prison nor House, which might have been easily done if they had been sprinkled.

But I am surprized at the Citation from the excellent Dr. *Watts*, from *1 Cor. x. 2.* " The Children of *Israel* " were baptized unto *Moses* in the Cloud and in the Sea, " in their Passage through the *Red Sea*, at their March from " *Egypt* ; not that they were dipped in the Water ; but " they were sprinkled by the Clouds over their Heads, and " perhaps by the Water which stood up in Heaps as they " passed by".

That they could not be sprinkled by the Cloud over their Heads, is evident, because the bright Side was next them, which consisted of a Pillar of Fire ; and every one knows that Fire never produces Water. Neither can we imagine, that they were sprinkled by the Waters on each Hand ; for if we consider their Situation it will be very unlikely, for their Number was six hundred thousand Men, besides Women and Children, that marched on Foot ; who could not be many less than double that Number, all which amounts to near two Million of *Israelites*, besides a mix'd Multitude of others who went up with them : Add to this their Beasts of Burden, their Flocks and Herds, even much Cattle. Now if we take an Idea of this vast Army and their Baggage, we cannot suppose they tarried to croud through a narrow Lane in the Sea, because the *Egyptians* were in Sight pursuing them, and must have fallen upon their Rear before they could have entered into it ; therefore their Front must be at least many Fur-longs broad, for they passed the Sea in one Night. All which Circumstances considered, it is highly improbable that

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about INFANT BAPTISM. 43

the Sprinkling of the Sea could reach the whole Breadth of their March, especially if we consider what a miserable Condition those must be in who were next the Wind. But after all the Scripture says expressly, the Children of *Israel* walked upon dry Land in the midst of the Sea. *Exod. xv. 29.* But it may be asked, what does the Apostle mean, when he says they were baptized thus? in my Opinion he was taking Notice of the Similitude between the Christian Baptism, and the Children of *Israel* in that Circumstance, as they (the Believers) are overwhelmed, covered, surrounded, or buried unto Christ by the Baptismal Water: so the *Israelites* were overwhelmed, covered, surrounded, or buried unto *Moses*, by the Cloud over their Heads, and the Sea as Walls on each Hand. But if this Interpretation is not true, I should be highly pleased to see a better, for that of Sprinkling is far from Satisfying.

As to your Pastor's comparing the "Quantity of Water in Baptism to Wine in the Lord's Supper". If there is Wine enough to drink in Remembrance of the Blood of Christ, it will answer the End of that Ordinance, but not otherwise: It is sufficient to observe, that if there is Water enough to represent the Burial and Resurrection of Christ, it will answer the End of Baptism, but not otherwise.

Your Pastor's next Reason against Dipping is, a Declaration which I little expected. "If we allow Dipping in Baptism to have been the primitive Practice, unless it could be made appear to be necessary, as we live in a cold Climate, and think it would be hazardous not only to many Infants, (who have a Right to be baptized) but to not a few grown Persons, to be plunged in the Water, and especially in the Winter-Season; so we do not use that Way, nor think ourselves obliged to it".

How far it is hazardous to Infants, is not before us, who say they have no Right to it. But if your Pastor does not think himself obliged to follow the primitive Practice, the Baptists do, and because it was the primitive Practice they think it necessary, and so ought all Christians who are in earnest for the Honour of Christ. But since he has brought in all the Physicians as against Dipping, without telling us who they are; let us hear what one of the most celebrated of the Age in that Faculty says in this Case; and one who as I am credibly informed, is not a *Baptist* himself. His Words are these,

Under this Head of Exercise, I cannot forbear recommending Cold-bathing, and I cannot sufficiently admire how it

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should ever come into such Diffuse, especially among Christians, when commanded by the greatest Law-giver that ever was under the Direction of God's Holy Spirit to his chosen People, and perpetuated to us in the Immersion at Baptism, by the same Spirit, who with infinite Wisdom is this, as in every thing else that regards the temporal and eternal Felicity of his Creatures, combines their Duty with their eternal Happiness *.

Next follows an Enquiry of a " Case of a sick Believer under the Apprehensions of Death, who was never baptized, and his Conscience accusing him for it, as if he should say, I don't think that Baptism will save me ; but I am now convinced that it is an Ordinance of Christ, and I cannot die in Peace, if I am not thereby admitted into his spiritual Kingdom ; and I earnestly beg that this may be done, and without Delay".

This is an odd Speech from the Mouth of a Believer who owns that Baptism cannot save him ; but it admits him into Christ's spiritual Kingdom. I always understood that the Members of Christ's spiritual Kingdom were admitted into it by the Operations of the Holy Spirit, reproving them of Sin, Righteousness and Judgment, according to his Promise John xvi. 8.

But your Pastor asks, " What would an Anabaptist Minister do in this Case, by this he strongly implies that he would sprinkle the Person". But it does not follow, for a Baptist Minister to satisfy the Conscience of the dying Person, might use the same Argument as our blessed Saviour did to the Jews, who were offended at his Disciples breaking the Sabbath as they thought, by rubbing out the Ears of Corn : He might let him know, that religious Duties must submit to Necessity, and that even the positive Institutions of God must be dispensed withal, when they are not practicable without destroying of Life, and especially rather than sacrifice them to the Inventions of Men. However, as your Pastor has given this Hint, it becomes all Believers, who are conscious that they have not been baptized according to Christ's Command and Example, to discharge their Consciences without delay, lest it should accuse them of Neglect when it is too late.

* Cheyne's *Essay of Health and long Life*, Chap. 4.

But I cannot but wonder at what follows, in which your Pastor seems to jest a little on the Subject of Baptism, by saying, "Indeed even timorous Women may have their Imagination rais'd to such a Height by being made to believe, that they are joyning with God's favourite and peculiar People; and that when they are led into the *baptismal Font*, they are *following the Lamb*, &c. as not only to be above Fear, but to fancy the cold Water to be as pleasant as a warm aromatick Bath. But that some have betrayed a very great Disorder upon such Occasions, cannot be deny'd". As to an *aromatic Bath*, it is the first time I have heard of it in this Argument, and as to Disorders, if we dared to retort, a great deal might be said as to many poor Infants crying, &c.

I agree with him, Christians ought to behave with Decency towards each other, and wish he had regarded this more when writing the above Paragraph. But the most remarkable of all is what follows. After all "whether Persons may have been baptized in their Infancy, or when Adult, and either by sprinkling or pouring of Water upon the Face, or dipping the whole Body in the liquid Element, this can be of no Signification to them without a new Nature, and a suitable Conversation".

Here I think your Pastor has broke in upon his whole System of *Infant-Baptism*; this being all that the *Baptists* contend for. They say, tarry till a new Nature is given, and a suitable Conversation produced, and then baptize them; otherwise Baptism can be of no Signification.

But to conclude, he says, "To depend upon the outward Rite (and the same may be said of all other Means of Religion) without being concerned about the genuine Spirit of Christianity, is a most dangerous Mistake, and if continued in will be fatal".

If your Pastor applies this to the *Baptists*, on Consideration, he will easily perceive himself mistaken in the Persons, for who depend upon the outward Rite most, they who believe Baptism enters Persons into the New Covenant of Grace, (whether they have received the genuine Spirit of Christianity or no,) or the *Baptists*, who believe Baptism is only a declarative Act of Obedience and Gratitude, for their being before received into the New Covenant of Grace, and made Partakers already of that genuine Spirit, which only makes their Baptism significant? And therefore the Fatality which

which attends a depending upon the outward Rite, can by no means fall on them.

Thus, Sir, I have given you my Thoughts on that Pamphlet, and if you are willing to inform yourself more, concerning this Subject, I would recommend to your reading Mr. Stennett's Answer to Mr. Ruffen. — Dr. Gales Reflections on Mr. Wall's History of Infant-Baptism. — The Supplement to the Salter's-Hall Sermons. — But above all, to an excellent Treatise, Intitled *Infant-Baptism no Institution of Christ*. I have only to add what I have here written, (as far as I know my own Heart,) proceeds not from any personal Prejudice against any *Pædobaptist* Minister or Member, (and as the Writer of this Conference is anonymous, it ought not to be so taken) but that the Truth concerning this sacred Ordinance may be brought to Light, that so it may appear whose Works are wrought in God : Especially seeing our Lord Jesus Christ (the great Lawgiver) has strictly charged us, to OBSERVE all things whatsoever he has commanded. Therefore I hope, that Friendship which has hitherto subsisted betwixt us, will still continue ; and that I shall always have the Pleasure to subscribe my self,

Yours, &c.



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